

questions submitted by a plurality of users via at least two client interfaces each of the at least two client interfaces being identified to the plurality of users as a forum on a predetermined subject matter of the forum, whereby one or more users may choose to visit a forum, the expert being presented simultaneously in each of the at least two forums, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving at the server at least two questions, the at least two questions being submitted via the at least two forums in which the expert is simultaneously presented;

routing the at least two questions to the expert via the server;

receiving the at least two questions to the expert by means of a personal expert interface, wherein the personal expert interface is uniquely associated with the expert;

receiving at least two commands at the server via the personal expert interface of the expert, wherein a first one of the at least two commands includes a first answer to a first one of the questions submitted from one of the at least two forums and a first instruction instructing the server to post the first answer, and the second one of the at least two commands includes a second answer to a second one of the questions submitted from another one of the at least two forums and a second instruction instructing the server to post the second answer;

receiving a third command at the server via the personal expert interface of the expert, wherein the third command instructs the server to route at least one of the first answer and the second answer for display on a personal expert interface of a peer reviewer of the expert to facilitate a review by the peer reviewer of the expert's answer; and

providing a payment by a third party to fund access to the network site for one or more of the plurality of users accessing one or more of the at least two fora, the third party being associated with a third party product or service.

(Emphasis added).

Amended independent claim 1 adds the step of the server receiving a third command from the personal expert interface of the expert that instructs the server to route at least one of the first answer and the second answer to the personal expert interface of a peer reviewer to facilitate a review by the peer reviewer of the expert's answer to the at least one of the first answer and the second answer. Support for this amendment may be found, for example, with reference to Applicant's specification at page 12, line 25 through page 13, line 29.

Applicant respectfully submits that, as of March 4, 1998,² TheBody.com neither disclosed nor suggested a personal expert interface that is uniquely associated with the expert and from which the expert is able to provide a third command that instructs the server to route at least one of the first answer and the second answer for display on a personal expert interface of a peer reviewer to facilitate a review by the peer reviewer of the expert's answer. In this regard, Applicant respectfully suggests comparison of amended independent claim 1 with allowable claim 8, which claims a method by which a first expert is able to issue a command from the first expert's personal expert interface to route a question to a personal expert interface of another expert. For at least the above-presented reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that amended independent claim 1 is not anticipated or made obvious by TheBody.com, and stands in condition for allowance. As each of claims 2 - 6 depends from allowable amended independent claim 1, Applicant further submits that dependent claims 2 - 6 are also allowable for at least this reason.

In the interests of prosecution efficiency, Applicant also amends independent claim 28 to claim:

28. A method for funding at least one interactive network site hosted by a server, the at least one interactive network site providing answers to questions presented by a plurality of users, the users communicating with the server via a plurality of client interfaces, each of the client interfaces being identified to the users as a forum on a predetermined subject matter of the forum, the forum enabling users to present questions and to view questions and answers relating to the predetermined subject matter of the forum, the method comprising the steps of:

generating at least two fora by the server on the at least one interactive network site;

receiving a question at the server presented by a user accessing a first forum at one of the at least one interactive network site;

posting the question by the server in a location on the server accessible to at least one expert;

presenting the question by the server to the at least one expert via a personal expert interface of the at least one expert, said interface being unique to the at least one expert and on which the question is displayed for the at least one expert to answer;

² The later of the archival dates accessed by the Examiner for TheBody.com

receiving at the server a command via the personal expert interface from the at least one expert in response to the question, wherein the command includes an answer responding to the question and an instruction; wherein the server posts the answer to the first forum accessed by the user to present the question; and the server further posts the answer to the question according to the instruction, wherein the instruction instructs that the answer be posted to at least a second one of the at least two forums at which the question was not presented by the user; and

displaying a banner advertisement for a third party on a page of at least one client interface accessed by the plurality of users; and

providing a payment for the banner advertisement by the third party, wherein an amount of the payment is determined by a monitoring of traffic on the network site by the server.

(Emphasis added).

Claim 28 is amended to essentially include the question and answer processing steps claimed in allowable claim 29, in particular including the step of receiving at the server a command via the personal expert interface from at least one expert that includes an answer to a question and an instruction; where the instruction instructs the server to post the answer to a first forum accessed by the user to present the question and to at least a second forum at which the question was not presented by the user. In addition to allowable claim 29, support for this amendment may be found, for example, with reference to Applicant's specification at page 11, lines 20 through 29 and Applicant's FIGs. 6A - 6C.

Applicant respectfully submits that, as of March 4, 1998, TheBody.com neither disclosed nor suggested the step of a personal expert providing a command to the server that includes an answer responding to the question and an instruction; where the instruction instructs the server to post the answer to a first forum accessed by the user to present the question and to at least a second forum at which the question was not presented by the user. For at least this reason, Applicant respectfully submits that amended independent claim 28 is not anticipated by TheBody.com, and stands in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of claims 1 - 6 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(a), 103(a) be withdrawn.

As described above, Applicant amends independent claims 1 and 28 the interests of prosecution efficiency in order to clearly and directly place these claims into condition for allowance. Nevertheless, Applicant wishes to make clear that these actions do not constitute admissions by Applicant that the former claims 1 and 28 as represented prior to these amendments are unpatentable in view of TheBody.com. In particular, while Applicant agrees with the Examiner that TheBody.com includes a web page that can be considered to be uniquely associated with an expert (for example, Dr. Judith Currier) who is represented in at least two forums (treatment, opportunistic infections), and permits users to submit questions about opportunistic infections and read answers about treatment and opportunistic infections.

However, Applicant submits that this page fails to disclose or suggest means enabling the expert is able to transmit commands to the server for posting answers to first and second questions, respectively, at first and second forums. Applicant submits that the web page referenced by the Examiner at TheBody.com is a page which simply enables users to submit and read questions, and to read answers. In contrast to the claimed invention, this page does not provide a facility by which experts may post answers to first and second questions at first and second forums, but rather provides a page as which such questions and answers are posted.³ For at least this reason, Applicant submits that former claims 1 and 28 are not made unpatentable by the cited reference.

³ Applicant notes that, at the time of the present invention, TheBody.com compiled and posted the lists of first and second answers manually rather than in an automated manner through the server (i.e., had no facility accessible via a personal expert interface of the expert to direct the server to post first and second answers at first and second forums).

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

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Respectfully submitted,

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